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The CASE of the
EXILED VAUDOIS,
AND
French Protestants,
STATED:

And their Relief Recommended to
All GOOD Christians,

Especially to Those of the
Reformed Religion :

IN A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at St. James Westminster,

April 5. 1699.

Being the Day of the Publick Fast.



458:90

By *William Wake*, D.D. Rector of *S. James Westminster*,
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

*Publis'd at the Desire of the Honourable the Board of Vestry ;
and of several Persons of Quality of the said Parish.*

L O N D O N :

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MATT. x. 42.

Whosoever shall give to drink unto One of these Little Ones, a Cup of Cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple; Verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his Reward.

OUR Blessed Saviour having spent the greatest Part of this Chapter in declaring to his Disciples what *Troubles*, and *Persecutions*, they should undergo for his Sake; takes Occasion from thence, in the *Verses* before the *Text*, to shew, how we ought to behave Our selves towards Those who should fall into any *Sufferings* upon such an Account; and how Great the *Reward* of our so doing should be. *He that receiveth you*, says he, *receiveth Me*; and *He that receiveth Me*, *receiveth Him that sent Me*. *He that receiveth a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets Reward*. And *He that receiveth a Righteous-man, in the Name of a Righteous-Man, shall receive a Righteous Man's Reward*. And, *Whosoever shall give to drink unto One of these little Ones, a Cup of cold water only, in the Name of a Disciple; Verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his Reward*.

I shall not trouble you with any nice Enquiry into the *distinction* which our Saviour, in these words, makes of Those whom he therein recommends to our *Charity*, and *Entertainment*. Three sorts of *Chri-*

stians he manifestly refers to in them, and speaks of *Those* in the *Text*, as the *least*, and *meanest*, of them All. And yet even of *These* He tells Us, that *Whosoever* should give but a *Cup of Cold water* to drink, to One such Christian, *in the name of a Disciple*; that is, should shew the least regard to him upon this account, That He *belongs to Christ*; He should in no wise lose his *Reward*; i. e. He should be very highly *Rewarded by God* for it.

Now this being the *Occasion*, and *Import* of these *Words*, I shall with Relation to both, proceed to discourse upon them, in this following *Method*;

- I. I will shew you, That those who *Profess* the *Gospel of Christ*, must expect oftentimes to meet with *Tryals*, and *Persecutions*, from *Wicked Men*, upon the account of it.
- II. That it is the *Duty* of every *Good Christian*, according to his *Ability*, to *assist* and *support* those who *suffer* upon such an *Account*. And,
- III. That whatsoever *Charity* we shall exercise towards such *Persons*, upon the account of their *Sufferings*, it shall turn to our great *Advantage* in the *other World*; where We shall be, in a singular manner, *Rewarded by God* for it.

I shall speak, but very briefly, to each of these *Points*; and so proceed to that *Application* of them, which the present *Occasion* requires of Me. And,

- I. That those who *Profess* the *Gospel of Christ*, must expect oftentimes to meet with *Tryals* and
Per-

Persecutions, from Wicked Men, upon the account of it.

This was what our *Saviour* expressly declared to his *Disciples* in this *Chapter*; and their own *Experience* sufficiently convinced them of the *Truth* of his *Prediction*.

If we look back to the *first State* of the *Church*, before the *Conversion* of the *Empire* to *Christianity*; what are all its *Histories* but the *Records* of those *Tryals* which its most eminent *Professors* underwent for the sake of it? What *Torments* they endured; what *Oppositions* they met with; and by what *Deaths* they perfected all their other *Sufferings*? When, in the *Language* of our *Apostle*, *Every one who would live Godly in Christ Jesus*, was sure to *suffer persecution*. Their *Religion* was their *Crime*: and there was no choice left them but to *renounce* it, or to resolve to *suffer*; it may be, to *Die*, for it.

Nor did the *Case* become much better afterwards. 'Tis true, the *Pretext* of the *Persecution* was alter'd: Men did not any longer suffer for the *Name* of *Christ*, as they had done before. But the *truth* of the *Gospel* was still *persecuted*, tho' under another *Character*: And the *Sufferings* which *Christians* have brought on their fellow *Christians*, have not been at all *less*, than what had been inflicted upon them by their *Common Enemies* heretofore.

It is indeed a most astonishing thing to consider to what a strange *degeneracy* the *Spirit* of *Christianity* has

has fallen in this particular. That a *Religion* founded upon *Love* and *Charity*, and which breaths out nothing more than *Kindness*, and *Gentleness*, in all its Precepts; should yet have become the Occasion of more *Cruelty*, and *Barbarity*, than ever any *Religion* in the World, besides, had been. But that which is yet more *Amazing*, as well as more *deplorable*, is; that Men should make it a matter of *Conscience* to the Principles of such a *Religion*, to persecute One another: And think that they *do God Service*, when they Dye their hands with the blood of His Servants. Yet to this degree of *Fury* have some *Christians*, in these later Ages, arrived: And have thereby given Us but too just a Ground, still to continue the Assertion I have laid down; That those who will profess the Gospel of Christ, in the Truth, and Purity of it, must expect, even in *Christian Countries*, to fall oftentimes under the severest Tryals, for the sake of it.

How this barbarous, and bloody Spirit, first got admission into the Church of Christ, I shall not now enquire. Certain it is, that as there is nothing more Unreasonable, in the nature of the thing its self, than to force Conscience, and to persecute men into a right faith; So is there nothing more contrary to all the Rules of the Gospel, than to propagate its interests by Violence, and Oppression. This the Primitive Christians, constantly objected to their Heathen Enemies. This all the Best, and Wisest Men, have generally asserted ever since: And, even the most Perverse, see the

Rea-

Reasonableness of it, when it comes to be their *own Case*; and they are themselves in danger of *Suffering* upon *this Account*. And yet such is the strange partiality of *Mankind*, that we hardly any of us know how to set bounds to this *Temper*, when we have the *Power* in our Hands. We think we have *all a Right* to *persecute Others*, tho' none have any to return it upon *Our selves*. And accordingly, we do all, in our several turns, both *Rail at Persecution* in *Matters of Religion*, and yet continue to *set up* for it.

But as this *Temper* has always been observed to prevail most on the *Worst Side*; (which is generally found to make up with *Violence*, what it wants in *Argument*;) So of all kinds of *Christians* never have any been more scandalously guilty of this *Barbarity* than those of the *Church of Rome*; that *dishonour* to the *Name*, and *Scourge* to the *Disciples of Christ*. Whose *Religion* as it has a Great *Allay of Paganism*, in it; so we ought the less to wonder if we see it wholly acted by a *Pagan Spirit*. And of the *Corruptions* whereof I shall, at present, say no more than this; that had we no other Ground than this to *reject* it, even this alone would be enough to warrant us in our disowning of it; that she has *Glutted* her self with the *Bloud* of the *best-Christians*, and still continues to *thirst* for more: And openly avows that, Principle, which I am now speaking against, as *Cruel and Anti-Christian*; that *Religion is to be propagated, and maintain'd by the Sword*.

I shall not here enter on any particular Relation of those *Persecutions*, with which that *Church* has filled the *Histories* of the whole World, for some *Ages* past: And of which not only *Europe*, but *Asia*, and *America*; *Infidels*, as well as *Christians*, have been the *Spectators*. Blessed be God! neither her *Cruelties*, nor her *Corruptions*, are unknown to any of Us. It shall suffice to say, that as our *Saviour Christ* from the beginning knew what would happen to his *Church* to the very end of the World; and foresaw as well, what the *Church of Rome* in these latter *Ages* should do to it, as what the *Jews* and *Heathens* were at the beginning to bring upon it; so we must conclude, that in this *Chapter*, he referr'd indifferently to both: And designed no less to *fortifie*, and *instruct us* of these *Times*, how to behave our selves under the *Persecutions* of *Popery*; than to direct his *Apostles*, and *Primitive Disciples*, how it would behove them to manage themselves, with relation to the *Heathen*, and *Jewish*, *Cruelty*.

Let this then be our first Conclusion, founded on the foreknowledge of *Christ*, and the Corruption of *Humane Nature*; which hitherto we are sure has been, and we have Reason to fear, will always continue to be but too true; viz. That those who profess the *Truth of Christianity*, and will hold fast to the purity of it; must expect to meet with many *Tryals*, and *Persecutions* from wicked Men, upon the account of it. I proceed,

II. To

H. To shew ; That it is the duty of Every Good Christian, according to his Ability, to *assist* and *support* those, who suffer on such an Account.

And that whether we consider them (1st.) Under the *common Character of Christians*. Or (2^{dly}) under the more *particular Circumstance, Of suffering for Righteousness sake*.

(1st) If we consider Them under the *Common Character of Christians* ; Even this alone will oblige Us not only to *minister* to their *Wants*, but to do it with a singular *desire*, and *affection* of *Mind* towards Them. God who has commanded Us to Do Good unto All Men ; has also commanded us to Do it, in a more especial manner, to *Those who are of the Household of Faith*. There is a *Brotherly Love* required of Us by *Christ*, towards One Another, beyond what we are obliged to have for the rest of Mankind : and which ought to dispose Us not only to a more tender *sense* of, and *compassion*, for their Needs ; but, with that, to a more *bountiful supply* of them. So that tho' a *Christian* must Love his very Enemy ; and Do Good to those who *despitefully Use him, and persecute him* ; yet he must remember, that there is a difference to be made by him between a *Brother* and an *Enemy* ; and he must as much love, and do Good to the One, above the Other, as he is more *nearly related* to the One, than to the Other.

Gal. vi. 10.

Heb. xli. 1.

1 Pet. i. 22

1 Jo. iii. 16

Mat. v. 44.

B

But

But this is the least part of our *Obligation* in the Case before Us: Which as it supposes the *Suffering* to be for the sake of *Christ's Religion*, So will it,

(2dly) Oblige us, in a more particular manner, to *Relieve* those, who fall into their *distresses* upon such an account.

In such Circumstances as these, not to *Assist* our *Brethren*, is to *deny* our *Faith*: And the *neglect* we put upon Them, will fall not so much upon Them, as upon *Him* whose *Disciples* they are, and for whose *Sake* they suffer.

Hence we may observe, in all the antient *Persecutions* of the *Church*, with what an *Officious* diligence the Other Christians still attended upon their *Martyrs* and *Confessors*. How they ministered to them in their *Prisons*, and *Bonds*: Went with them to their *Judgments*; and would not leave them at their very *Sufferings*. With what *Zeal*, and *Readiness*, they furnish'd them with such things as they stood in need of: How they *Encouraged* them in their *Conflicts*; and shew'd their earnest desire to partake with them in their *Sufferings*, as they did in the *Cause* for which They suffered.

Thus they *Confess'd Christ*, by *Owning* of those who were *Persecuted* for their *Confession* of Him: And thus ought every Good Christian to *Confess him* still. In a *publick War*, if any One part of a *Country* be destroy'd, it is but an *Act of Justice* for the rest, to bear their share in the loss; and, to

contribute towards the Repair of the damage that was sustain'd by it. The Case is, in reality, the same here. We are all *Members* of the same *Common, Catholic, Church of Christ*. If *Persecution* for the *Faith* arises, which part soever suffers, 'tis the *Church* that is *persecuted*. And we ought to account our selves concern'd to bear our Share in the *Evils* which our *Fellow-Christians* Undergo, for the *Common Cause* of the *Gospel*; as We hope to be one day made partakers with them, in the *Promises* of it.

Here therefore is a duty, which not only *Christian Charity*, but even *Common-Justice*, and *Equity*, oblige us unto. In this Case, to desert our *Brethren*, is to betray our *Faith*; And we shall, in effect, *Renounce* the *Cause* for which they suffer, if we refuse to partake with them in their *Sufferings*. But to *Own* and to *Receive* them; to *Cherish*, and *Relieve* them; and that as *suffering* for the *Cause* of *Christ*; this is openly to joyn with them in their *Confession*: And, as our *Saviour* here assures us, if we do *communicate* with them in their *Afflictions*, we shall also be made partakers with them of their *Reward*.

Which brings Me to the last *Point* I propos'd to speak to,

III. That whatsoever *Charity* we shall exercise towards such *Persons*, upon the account of their *Sufferings*; it shall turn to our great *Advantage* in the *Other World*; where we shall be, in a *Singular Manner*, *Rewarded* by *God* for it.

There is hardly any *Virtue* prescribed to Us in the *Gospel*, to the *Practice* whereof so many *Promises* have been made by God, as to this of *Charity*. In the *Old Testament*, it pleased God to encourage the *Jews* to a liberal Exercise of it, by the Hope of a *present Retribution* that should be made to Them for it. And tho' under the *Gospel*, such *Promises* as these are not to be expected ; yet has our *Saviour Christ* assured Us, that a *plentiful Reversion* shall be laid up for Us in *Heaven*, to reward every *Act of Charity* that We perform here upon *Earth*.

An Eminent Argument whereof we meet with in the account which He has given Us of the *last Judgment* : And in which He seems to make the whole Issue of our *Acquittal*, or *Condemnation*, in a manner, to depend upon it. For having told us how he will then divide the *Sheep from the Goats* ; and set the one on his *Right Hand*, and the other on his *Left* : He thus delivers the *Sentence* which He will pass on both. He will say to those on his *Right Hand* ; Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the *Kingdom*, prepared for you from the beginning of the *World*.
 —34: For I was an *Hungry* and ye gave me *Meat* ; *Naked* and ye *Cloathed* me ; *Sick* and in *Prison*, and ye *Ministred* unto me. But he will say to those on his *Left Hand* ; Depart ye *Cursed* into *Everlasting Fire*, prepared for the *Devil*, and his *Angels*. For I was an *Hungry*, and ye *Fed* me not ; *Naked* and ye *Cloathed* me not ; *Sick* and

Matt. xxv.
32, 33.

and in Prison, and ye Ministred not unto Me. These are the Sentences, which our Saviour Christ will pronounce, upon the Good and Bad at the last Day. And from which if we may not generally conclude, that Our Charity is the only Thing that shall hereafter be Enquired into, and be either Rewarded, or Punished for ever; yet thus much we may certainly infer, that it is one of the main Things by which Our Piety shall be judged of: And that he who has a true Love for his Neighbour, and is upon all Occasions ready to do all the Good he can for him, shall hardly fail of being Accepted by God, as he will be sure to be generally beloved of Men, for his Beneficence.

But it is not only our Charity that shall entitle Us to a Reward, in the present Case; tho' even that alone would be Sufficient, to make Good the Promise of the Text to Us. He who Relieves a Persecuted Christian, in the Name of a Disciple; because he belongs to Christ, and suffers for his Sake; shall be considered by God, not only for his Charity towards his Neighbour, but for his Confession of Christ too: And have a part in the Reward, which the Other is to Receive upon the account of such his Persecution.

And this at once both ascertains, and encreases the Retribution of such a Charity. It renders it both more Excellent in its self, and more Acceptable unto God: Who as he will, in the first place, Reward those

those who *Suffer* for his sake; so will he in the Next, Consider *Those* who *Own* them in their *Sufferings*, and extend their *pious Beneficence* to them, upon the account of them.

Hence we may observe, with what *Extraordinary Circumstances*, our *Saviour Christ* delivers the Promise of the *Text* to this purpose. The *Person* of whom he speaks, is One of the *least* of his *Disciples*; the meanest of any that should be called to *suffer* for his sake. The *Charity*, in which he instances, is the poorest of all *Charities*: A *Cup of Cold Water*; Such as the most indigent person is able to Give, and hardly any can be so far Reduced, as to stand in need of it. And yet even this *little, contemptible act of Charity*, if done to one of the *meanest* of *Christ's Disciples*; in the *Name of a Disciple*, shall not lose its *Reward*. So acceptable a thing is it to God to *Confess* him, in any *Way*, before *Men*! And so certainly shall he who do's it, be *Gloriously Rewarded* by him to all *Eternity*.

And here then let us stop; and from the general Consideration of the *duty proposed*, and of the *Great Reward* which it has pleased God to promise to the faithful discharge of it; proceed to that *Application* which his *Providence* has call'd Us, at this time, to make of it. In pursuance whereof, if the *Principles* already laid down be admitted, as the true measure both of our *Duty* and *Interest*, in this particular; then I shall need only to shew, that you
have

have here a proper Occasion presented to you, to practice the *One*, and to advance the *Other*. And that I shall do in this following method.

1st. I will shew, That the *Persons* here Recommended to your *Charity*, are indeed the *Disciples* of *Christ*.

2^{dly}. That they do suffer for Righteousness sake. And therefore,

3^{dly}. Ought to be Considered, and Relieved by Us, upon the account of such their Sufferings.

And 1st. That the *Persons* here Recommended to your *Charity*, are indeed the *Disciples* of *Christ*.

This is a Point that I should not have thought it needful to insist upon, had not the Calumnies of our Common Enemies obliged me to it. But since They have thought fit again to Revive the malicious Slanders of their Ignorant, and Prejudiced Revizars; and to set them off to the World with all the advantage that their Wit, and Language, enabled them to do; It is necessary in justice to these poor, persecuted Christians, to place their History in its true light; and to express our Charity towards them, as well by Vindicating their Reputation, as by Ministering to their Needs.

Monfieur
de Meaux's
Variations
des Egl.
Protestan.
liv. xi.

To take then this matter from the beginning: The *Persons* of whom we are now speaking, are a Portion of the *Christians* of the *Evangelical Churches* of *Piemont*. The common Name by which they are
most

most known, is that of *Vaudois*, or *Waldenses*: So called not from *Peter Waldo*, as has commonly been supposed; but from the place of *their Habitation*; the *Valleys* under the *Alpes*; within Three of which the *Churches* we are now speaking of were comprehended.

Leger.
Hist. des
Eglises E-
vangel. des
Vallees de
Piemont.
liv. 1. cap. 2.
Allix. Re-
marks,
chap. xix.

Who it was that first planted the *Gospel* in these Parts; or about what *time* it was done, we cannot certainly tell. But as our *Religion* was propagated in the very times of the *Apostles*, into the Other Parts of *Italy*; so is it most probable that it was, not long after, *settled* here too; tho' by what *Evangelist*, we are not able to determine.

Christianity being thus brought into these Parts, and that, no doubt, in the same parity in which it was generally taught in those *first Ages*; continued in these *Churches*, as it did in *Others*, for some considerable time, if not free from *All Corruption*; yet at least, free from those *dangerous Errors*, which afterwards began to creep into the World. But about the *Eighth Century*, the business of *Image-Worship*, added to some Other more *Early Superstitions*; began to disturb the *Peace* of the *Church*, and to *Enflame* the *Zeal* of the *best Christians* to the Opposing of it.

Great was the Contention between the *Eastern* and *Western Churches* upon this Occasion: The One, with the 2d Synod of *Nice*, (by Them accounted a *General Council*) standing up in the *Defence* of *Images*; The Other, with that of *Frankford*,

Vide Car.
M. & Sy-
nod. Parif.
Script. de
Tmagin.

ford, as stiffly declaring against the *Worship* of Them.

Among those who, in these *Western Parts*, appeared in the defence of the *Christian Truths*, none was more Eminent than *Claudius*, the Learned, and Zealous Bishop of *Turin*; in whose Diocess these Churches of the *Valleys* lay. The Point He began with, was this of *Images*: But his *Pity*, and *Learning*, soon carry'd him farther; and led him on both to the *Discovery*, and the *Reformation*, of several Other *Abuses*, that had privily crept into those Parts. The *Invocation of Saints*; The *Superstitious Use*, and *Honour of Relics*; but, above all, the Groundless Pretence of the *Popes Authority*; were the Chief Points against which he declared his *Repentments*: And the Issue of his Endeavours was, that tho' He met with much *Opposition*, and rais'd to himself many *Enemies*, yet he went on prosperously with his Undertaking; and laid the Foundation of that *Purity of Christianity* in his Diocess, which has ever since been preserved by these Churches of the *Valleys*, to this very Day.

Thus early began the *Reformation of Religion* in those Parts: But that which most contributed to the future Security of it, was another Accident which fell out not long after; and of which it will therefore be necessary for Me to give you a particular Account.

Car. à S.
Paul Ge-
ogr. S. lib.
ii. Ital. n.
iv. vii. x.
Allix. Re-
marks.
chap. xiii.

In the *first* Times of *Christianity*, so far was the *Bishop* of *Rome* from being thought to have a *General Authority* over the *Whole Church* of *Christ*, that his *Jurisdiction* did not extend to the neighbouring *Diocess* of *Italy* its self. His *Authority* was limited to a *Certain Tract* of *Land* about the *City*, called the *Sub-urbicary Region*; Whilst the *Churches* of *Italy* were under another *Government*, and Acknowledged the *Bishop* of *Milan* for their *Head*.

Allix. Re-
marks Ch.
xiv. Baron
Annal.
An. 1059

It cannot be doubted but that this must have been no small Grievance to the *ambitious tempers*, and *designs*, of the *Bishops* of *Rome*: Who therefore omitted no Endeavours to gain the *Bishop* of *Milan* to their side; and to persuade him to yield to their *Authority*. Yet still that *Church* preserved its *Liberty* for near 1100^d. years after *Christ*; and then by *Artifice*, and *Faction*, was either *forced*, or *perswaded* to part with it.

It happen'd about that time, that among other things, a Controversy was raised between the *Clergy*, and *People* of that *Diocess*, concerning the *Marriage* of their *Priests*. To compose this, *Pope Nicholas* the *Ild.* became a *Mediator* between them; and sent *Peter Damian*, as his *Legate*, to manage the difference for him. And the Conclusion was, that tho' with much difficulty, and at the hazard of his *Life*; the *Cunning Legate* carried his Point, and *perswaded* the *Bishop* to submit to him.

Scarce

Scarce was this Affair thus ended, and the *Legat* well gone, before the *Bishop* began to perceive the false *Step* he had made; and resolved, in the best manner he could, to recover himself out of the Snare into which he had fallen. In order whereunto, He called a *Synod* of his *Own Province*; disannull'd all that the *Legat* had done; and asserted the *Rights* of the marry'd *Clergy*.

From hence began an *Open Schism* in the *Church of Milan*. The *One part* adhered to the *Interests* of *Rome*: The other, with their *Arch-Bishop*, stood up for their own *Liberties*; and the *Rights* of the *Clergy*. And being for this deserted by the Rest, they communicated by themselves in a place called *Pataria*, and from thence were afterwards known by the Name of *Patarines*.

To this Party, as that which had the Greatest Right on its side, the *Churches* of the *Valleys* joyn'd themselves. And being thus broke off from the *Communion* of the *Roman Church*, they kept themselves free from the *Corruptions* of it; and maintained themselves in so much the greater Purity, by their *Constant*, and *Earnest Oppositions* to it.

It was not long after this, that *Peter Waldo*, of Leger Hist. des Vaudois l. 1. c. 25 whom I before spake, began a *Reformation* of *Religion* at *Lyons*: Whose party being dispersed, many of them chose to retire for safety into the *Valleys*; and thereby gave Occasion to the *Vulgar Error*, of his being the first Founder of the *Evangelical Churches* there.

Thus were these *Churches* both betimes *Reform'd*; and *Settled*, and *Secured*, in their pure *Profession* of the *Gospel*. It would be too long to relate, what great Good was done, by their means, to all the other *Churches* of *Europe*. What *Colonies* they sent out into *France*, *Germany*, *England*, and even into *Italy* its self; to propagate the *Truth* of the *Gospel*. From these *Churches* it was that our *Wicleff* derived his *Faith*, and *Knowledge*. From these, the *Churches* of *Bohemia* were establish'd. Here, in short, was the *Truth* of *Religion* both *Taught*, and *Maintain'd*; till at last it pleased God to give it a *free passage*, and a *larger Dominion*; by the *Great Reformation* which was generally made in *Europe*, about the beginning of the *last Century*. *Anno. 1517*.

These then are the *Persons* whom we now recommend to your *Charity*. They are a part of the most antient of all the *Reformed Churches* of *Europe*. Who by breaking off betimes from the *Tyranny*, and *Communion*, of the *Bishop* of *Rome*, were never at all involved in the most part of those *Errors* which that *Church* abounds with; And from the *Ninth Century* downwards, have stood clear of those, into which they were *before fallen*.

I go on, *ally*, To shew; That what they now *Suffer*, is for the sake of the *Gospel* of *Christ*.

I have before observed, that it was about the middle of the *xith Century*, that the *Church* of *Rome* usurping upon the *Authority* of that of *Milan*, occasion'd a *Seperation*

peration of many of the *Italic Churches* from its *Communion*; and of these of the *Valleys* among the rest. And if we look back into the *Ecclesiastical History* of that *Province*, we shall find that from thenceforth they never enjoy'd any Rest from those *Violences*, and *Oppressions*, which the *Malice* and *Interest* of that *Proud, Ambitious See*, found means to raise against them.

To pass by the *Bulls*, the *Sentences*, and *Excommunications* which were continually thunder'd out from the *Vatican* against Them: and the Effect of which many of these Poor Men sufficiently felt, in the time of *Pope Alexander* the III. Anno. 1180 * How terrible was the *Decree* of *Pope Lucius* the III. against them? Who not content to *Excommunicate* them for their *Hereſie*, and to invite the *Civil Government* to engage on his side against them; obliged all *Princes* to take a *Corporal Oath* to make search after them, and to use their utmost Endeavours utterly to extirpate them out of their *Dominions*.

Thus their *Tryals*, and *Persecutions* began; but they did not stop here. For what *Lucius* decreed; *Pope Innocent* the III, took care to put in vigorous Execution. He renew'd this *Order* against them; and Caused diligent Search to be every where made after them. And to strengthen the *Churches Authority*, *Pope Honorius* the III, not only continued the same *Method*, but obtain'd of the *Emperour*

* Fre-

Vil. Con-
cil. Lateran
iii. apud
Labb To. x
p. 1504. &
Cap. xavii.
de Hereti-
cis.
* Ibid Col.
1737.

Concil. iv.
Lateran
Cap. 3. de
Heret.
Add. Labb
To. xi p. 8.
234.

*Frederic.
ii. Constit.
Sec. 5, 6, 7,
8. Constit.
Feud. pag.
27
Labb. To.
xi col 334.

* *Frederic* the II, that memorable *Edict*, which is still preserved in the *Feudal Law*, against them.

But above all the rest, most effectual was the *Course* which *Gregory* the IX. pitch'd upon, to destroy them. He settled the *Inquisition* into an *Establish'd Office* against Them: and so perfected that *Design* which his Predecessor *Innocent* the III, had set on foot, for their Ruin.

Leger.
Hist l. ii. c.
2. Mor.
land. l. ii.
c. 1.

How those *barbarous Executioners* of the *Iniquity* of the *Romish See*, proceeded against them, it were too long to Recount. Much they suffer'd, both by their *secret Proceedings*; and by their *Open Violences*. I shall rather observe, that when this Method also proved too slow to answer the *eager Desires*, and *Expectations* of their *Enemies*; at length Pope *Innocent* the VIII. bethought himself of a more compendious way of doing their Business. He raised a *Holy War* against Them: And sent *Albert* his *Legate* into the *Valleys*, at the Head of 18000 Men, all bent with *Zeal*, and *Arms*, to their Destruction.

But from this *bloody Attempt* also, it pleased God to deliver them: Who in despite of all their Endeavours, has continued them still *Monuments* of his own *Mercy*; and for a *Reproach* of the *Cruelty*, as well as *Corruptions*, of their *Roman Persecutors*.

At last, Another *Method* was resolved upon; and that such a One, as nothing but the miraculous Hand of God could deliver them from. A

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Congregation was Erected, and fix'd at *Turin* (the Leger. Hist. l. ii. chap. 6. Capital City of the Dukes of *Savoy*, in whose Territories the most Considerable Part of these Churches were seated) for the Propagation of the Faith, and the destruction of Hereticks; so its *Stile* ran; but which in truth was intended for the particular design, of Ruining the Churches of the *Valleys*; as the Event has too plainly shewn.

It was about the time of the last *Jubilee*, that this Design was unhappily formed against Them; and it was but a very little while before they felt the deplorable Effects of it. Their whole Country being so utterly ruined in 1655. and their Numbers so weaken'd; that but for the present *Interposition* of almost all the Protestant Princes, and States, of *Europe* on their behalf, they must have fallen under a final desolation. But from this last disaster, that Part of these Churches which is now Recommended to your Charity, had the good Fortune to be preserved: Who having, some years before, Anno. 1633. Memor. Recond. di Vittorio Siri. Vol. vii. p. 500. Sec. been united to the French Crown, as Dependents on the Garrison of *Pignerol*, enjoyed thereby the Protection of that State.

What their Condition since that time has been, the Severe Proceedings of that Court against all the Reformed Churches of its Dominions, may suffice to tell Us. I shall only observe, that being forced by the Persecutions they suffer'd from their New-Masters, to retire to their Brethren under the Duke of *Savoy's*

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See the account of
that persecution
publish'd
at Oxford.
4^{to} 1689.

Government; they accordingly bare their share in the Great *Calamities* which that *Prince* brought upon the *Valleys* * in the year 1686.

How their *Present Circumstances* stand, His *Majesties Letters* set out to you. They are banish'd from their *Country*; forced to abandon their *Houses*, and *Lands*; their *Friends*, and *Relations*; and to seek for Refuge in such other *Places*, as the *Providence of God*, and the *Charity of Protestants States*, and *Princes*, should provide for Them.

And here then let us stop, and take a Short View of the miserable Condition of these poor, persecuted *Christians*; and consider what they have suffer'd, during these last 600 years, upon the account of their *Religion*.

Leger.
Hist. des
St. Sam.
Vaudois.
Merland.
Hist. of the
Evangel.
Churches
of Piem.
Book iv. c.
6 &c.

If 1st. we respect the *Cruelty* of their *Persecutors*, What barbarous Slaughters have they Committed upon them? The *Histories* are still extant, and some of them in our own Language, that convey the Particulars to Us: And they give us so lively an *Image* of the true *Spirit of Popery*, that I cannot but wish they were in the hands of Every *Sober*, and *Charitable Christian* among us.

Thus much in General, I may venture to say; That whether we regard the *number* of Those who have suffer'd by their hands, or the *nature*, and *quality* of their *Sufferings*; Scarce did the whole *Church of Christ* undergo more in the *Ten Heathen Persecutions*, than these poor *Churches* alone have undergone,

gone, from the more than *Heathen Cruelty*, and *Inhumanity* of their *Romish Enemies*.

Nor has 2dly : The *Injustice* of their *Sufferings* been less Evident, than their *Sufferings* themselves have been *Notorious*. To say nothing of the strange *Paradox*, of *Christians* persecuting of *Christians*, for the Profession of the *Gospel of Christ*. To omit the *Inoffensiveness* of their *Lives* and *Manners* ; and in which their very *Enemies* themselves, after all the false pretences of some others of their Party, have Gloriously justified Them. What can be more Unjust ; than for a People dwelling as it were alone ; *seperated* by *Vast Mountains* from all their Neighbours round about Them ; Content with what *Nature* furnishes them withal ; and desiring only to Live in Peace with their Neighbours, and in the quiet *Enjoyment* of a Good *Conscience* towards *God* ; should, for nothing, be harass'd, and oppress'd : *Hunted* like *Wild Beasts* ; *Persecuted* with *Fire*, and *Sword* ; and treated as if they were not worthy to live upon the Earth?

Nay but this is not all : Their *Enemies* have not only thus persecuted them *without a Cause* ; but against their Own most Solemn, and Sacred *Engagements* to the *Contrary*. They have broken the *Publick Faith* ; *Violated* their Own *Treaties*, and *Promises* ; And effectually shewn how little *Truth* they think themselves *obliged* to keep with those whom they call *Heretics* ; whenever they can get a fair Opportunity to destroy them.

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And

Leger.
Hist. l. i.
c. 30.

And had their *Fury*, and their *Malice*, been content to stop at their *Lives*, and *Goods*; it might the more easily have been excused. But their *Cruelty*, and their *Falseness*, have carried them beyond these; whilst to excuse their own *Proceedings*, and bespatter their *Adversaries*; they have,

3dly; Done, what in them lies, to murder the *Reputation* of those whom they have *Persecuted*: and to render them *Odious* to the *present Age*; and *Infamous*, and *detestable*, to all succeeding *Generations*.

Witness those false Accounts which they have industriously spread abroad in the World, of these Poor Men. If we enquire into their *Faith*; they are *Arians*, and *Manichees*: that is to say, Monsters of Men; and not worthy the *Name*, or *Character* of *Christians*. If we consider their *Manners*; Their very *publick Meetings* are full of *Lust*, and *Debauchery*: And they commit in them such *Sins*, as ought not to be once named among the *Saints*. And as for the *Proceedings* that have been made against them; They have been for their *Sedition*, and *Rebellion*. They have drawn the *fury* of *War* upon themselves, by their own *unquiet Behaviour*; and and may thank their Own, undutiful demeanor to their Princes, for whatsoever *Calamities* They have *suffer'd* from them.

These are the accounts which those of the *Roman Communion* have delivered to the World of these
poor

Leger.
Hist. l.
l. c. 19.
30.
Allix.
Remarks
c. 26.

Leger
lib. l. 11.
c. 10. &c.

poor Christians. I shall not need to say that in all this they only set forth their *Own* Falseness and Malice; and publish to the world not what these *Christians* are, but what they would have Men *think Them* to be. See Leger. before. This their *own Authors*, have sufficiently already done. It is enough that we know who they are that give us these *Characters*, to enable us to judge what Credit is to be given to them: And that beyond the *Alps*, among those of their *own Communion*, We our selves are set forth in as *Black Characters*, both with respect to our *Faith*, and *Manners*; as ever these distressed Persons have been Represented to Us, on this side the Mountains. The short of the Matter is, that both *They* and *We*, freely declare against the *Tyranny*, and *Corruptions* of the *Church of Rome*; and that is enough to warrant the Worst that can be said, to *blacken*, and *bespatter* both *Them*, and *Us*.

But I must not insist upon these Matters; but having now more fully than I design'd, shewn, both *Who* the *Persons* are who ask your *Charity*; and *How* they come to *stand in need* of it; shall proceed,

3dly: And very briefly to represent to you, What just Reason we have to *succour*, and *assist* them; upon the account of These their *Sufferings*.

If (1st.) We consider either the *Cause*, or *Authors* of their *Persecution*; it will from both appear that we of the *reform'd Religion* must *Support Them*;

or they must be left to sink under their *Afflictions*: for We may be confident, that if we do not help them, No body else will.

Were the Case here that of *Christianity in General*; Did these Poor Men suffer by the Hands of *Turks*, or *Infidels*; One might then hope that the *Common Love*, and *Duty*, we all profess to our *Blessed Saviour*, and his *Gospel*, might move every *Church*, however differing in other Matters, yet to joyn together for their *Relief*. But it is the misfortune those for whom we are now concern'd, that they are persecuted not by the *Common Enemy*, but by those who are called by the *same Name of Christians*. They suffer, not for the *defence* of the *Gospel*, but for the maintenance of the *Truth*, and *Purity*, of it; against those who have either *mistaken*, or *perverted* the *Faith* of it. And if We, who in this are agreed with *Them*, do not *relieve* them; with what Reason can we expect, that those whom they *Oppose*, and by whom they are *Persecuted*, should help *Them*?

Here therefore is a Case, in which the *Argument* of the *Text* returns with a *double force* upon Us. These *Persons* are not only the *Disciples of Christ*; but of the *same particular Faith* and *Communion* with our selves. They are our *Brethren* not only as they are *Christians*, but as they are *Reform'd too*; and which is yet more, They *suffer* for being so. They might have *believed* in *Christ*, and yet have continued in the

the peaceable Enjoyment of their *Country*, and *Possessions*. But they could not have continued *Reformed* without *quitting* them; and therefore they readily forsook both. And surely the least we can do to testify our concurrence with them in this *Profession*, will be to extend our *Charity* towards them: And thereby to shew that We do own their *Cause*; and account it such, as deserves to be *suffer'd* for.

But (2dly,) It is not only a *Matter of Charity*, but of *Interest* also to Us, to *help*, and *relieve* them: And that is an *Argument*, which where it is once *received*, seldom fails of *prevailing* with most Men.

It cannot be unknown to any among Us, what *Endeavours* have been *used*, and what *projects* have been *laid*, for these last *forty*, or *fifty* Years, utterly to root the *Protestant Interest* out of *Europe*. What Progress has been made by our Enemies to this purpose in *Piemont*, *Hungary*, *Bohemia*, *France*; shall I add, and here at Home too, both in *England*, and *Ireland*, is evident to all of Us. And had the design succeeded, as it was verily *believed* and *hoped* it would have done; I do not see what could have preserved the *Reformed Religion* from a *general destruction*.

But blessed be God! Who in most of these places has disappointed their *Designs*: and we hope will, in the End, turn them, (as he has already in part done)

done) to their own *Shame*, and *Confusion*. And has effectually convinced us, how necessary it is for us to *unite* together in *Interest* and *Affection*, against our *Common Enemies*; if ever we mean to *support* our *selves*, and our *Cause*, from *Ruine*; by their *unwearied Malice*, and *Indefatigable* endeavours against Us.

It is but a little time since we were called upon to receive those of the *Reformed Church of France* into our Bosoms. By doing of this we have preserved so much of the *Protestant Interest* from sinking. And all that their *Persecutors* have gained by their Cruelties against them is but this, that they have forced them to *change* their *Country*; but have not at all lessened either their *Zeal* for their *Religion*, or their *Ability* to *defend* it.

About
11500.
Persons.

We are now invited to preserve the *Remains* of the same *Church*, and of some of those of the *Valleys* of *Piemont* with Them. A *Flock* little in *Number*, but of *Great Worth*: And such as we cannot *suffer* to *Perish*, without fixing an *Eternal Infamy* upon our *Names*, for our *Uncharitableness*.

Whose turn it may next be to *suffer* in this *Cause*, we cannot tell. This we know, that be it whose it will, Our *Charity* will have its *Reward* with *God*; and give a *Good Example*, and *Encouragement* to the *Church of Christ*. We may, by what we do for these poor, persecuted Men, *prolong* our *Own Tranquility*; and so meet with a *Reward*

ward on *Earth*. But though we should not ; yet this we are sure, that we shall hereby purchase to our selves an *Inheritance* in *Heaven*. Our *Unrighteous Mammon*, shall prepare for us an *eternal Habitation*. What we now give for the sake of *Christ*, and to his *Disciples*, in his *Name*; he will one Day return, as if we had done it unto *Himself*: And *Verily I say unto you, ye shall in No wise lose the Reward of it.*

E R R A T A.

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